

## VIII. MAINTENANCE

### A. Grass Cutting



Specialized mowers are used to cut sloped surfaces of earthworks. Mowers automatically adjust to the angle of the slope. Mowers are also equipped with floatation tires that provide safe operation and do not mar earthworks. (Battery IV, 6/1999)



Grass is cut at a height of five (5) inches on the earthworks twice a year, i.e. once in mid-spring and once in early fall. This will allow adequate time for the grass to grow tall and provide a protective cover for the earthworks over the summer and winter periods. (Fort Wadsworth, 5/1995)





Should the spring or fall growing season be less than ideal, i.e. drought conditions, cutting can be reduced to once a year. However, a minimum of one (1) cutting a year is necessary to keep “volunteer” woody stem plants from becoming reestablished. This photo shows oak saplings at a height of six feet and sweetgum saplings at a height of seven feet after just eighteen months of growth. (Battery IV, 1/2000)



Grass is cut to a height of three (3) inches on the terreplein of the fort to allow visitor access. (Fort Wadsworth, 5/1995)



Maintaining a tall grass on the earthworks outlines the features of the forts, batteries and salients. It also serves as a deterrent to keep visitors from walking on top of the walls. To protect earthworks, grass is not mowed when the ground is wet. (Fort Wadsworth, 5/1995)

## **B. Nutrient Applications**

Soil samples should be taken once every two years. The results will indicate the amounts of phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and magnesium the soil can provide to the grass and what, if any, supplemental fertilizer is needed. It will also indicate the acidity (pH) of the soil and whether lime is needed.

- If the pH levels need to be brought up, lime can be added (per soil sample prescription) at six-month intervals.
- Fertilizing cool season grasses, i.e. tall fescue, is best done in late summer or fall.

## **C. Irrigation**

- It may be necessary to irrigate earthworks during the first year if drought conditions occur. After grass is established, irrigation is not normally needed.
- If a site is irrigated, a slow, deep soaking method is necessary to promote a deep root system.

## **D. Aeration**

- Aerate at a minimum of once every two years with a “spike” type roller to promote air transfer in the soil and to reduce compaction of soil.